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[COMMITTEE PRINT]

Union Calendar No. ——

88th Congress, 1st Session - - - - - - House Report No. ——

UNITED STATES INFORMATION PROBLEMS IN VIETNAM

——— REPORT

BY THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

HOLD FOR RELEASE

SEP 30 P.M.

SEPTEMBER —, 1963.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed, with illustrations

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C., September —, 1963.

Hon. John W. McCormack,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Speaker: By direction of the Committee on Government Operations, I submit herewith the committee's ———— report to the 88th Congress. The Committee's report is based on a study made by its Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee.

William L. Dawson, *Chairman.*

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[COMMITTEE PRINT]

Union Calendar No. ——

88TH CONGRESS, 1st Session } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT No. ——

U.S. INFORMATION PROBLEMS IN VIETNAM

SEPTEMBER —, 1963.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. DAWSON, from the Committee on Government Operations, submitted the following

REPORT

BASED ON A STUDY BY THE FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE

On September —, 1963, the Committee on Government Operations had before it for consideration a report entitled "United States Information Problems in Vietnam." Upon motion made and seconded, the report was approved and adopted as the report of the full committee. The chairman was directed to transmit a copy to the Speaker of the House.

I. SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

In mid-1962 the Special Subcommittee on Government Information first looked into complaints that U.S. officials in Vietnam were attempting to control stories filed by U.S. correspondents covering the war between President Ngo Dinh Diem's Government of Vietnam and the Communist Vietcong guerrillas. The complaints did not allege that information of a military-security nature should be divulged, and the subcommittee has the firm conviction that information of military value should not be disclosed. Millions of U.S. dollars and the lives of many U.S. citizens have been spent to assist the Government of Vietnam. The American people have a right—in fact, a need—to know what is going on in Vietnam, and many U.S. correspondents are filing stories from the capital of Saigon and from the combat areas in the jungles to attempt to fill that need.

After the Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee was created in January 1963, by Congressman William L. Dawson, chairman of the House Government Operations Committee, a further investigation of Vietnam information problems was completed. At the subcommittee's first hearing with news media repre-

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sentatives to discuss Government information plans and policies, James Reston, Washington bureau chief of the New York Times, pointed up the Vietnam information situation. He testified:

> We are engaged in quite a war in Vietnam and this country hasn't the vaguest idea that it is in a war. The news is being managed, I think, in Vietnam; and it is being managed on a principle that I think is understandable from the point of view of the Diem government. But I question it from the point of view of our Government and our tradition. The Diem government wants access strictly limited to what is going on in the jungles. I don't know whether the Pentagon wants it strictly limited, or partially limited, as to exactly what our aircraft are doing; whether they are merely flying them, whether they are manning guns, and so on. I am very confused as to the degree.
>
> But, because the Diem government wants to control the news there, we are, I think, as a government, going along with that. Maybe we have to do it. I don't know. I doubt it, myself, if we are responsible more or less for directing the war. Americans are being killed in the war. We are simply supplying all the material for the war (hearings, "Government Information Plans and Policies," pt. 1; Mar. 19, 1963, p. 71).

At a subsequent public hearing on May 24, 1963, Robert J. Manning, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, was asked about a cable in early 1962 from the Secretary of State to the U.S. Ambassador in Vietnam on the handling of U.S. correspondents covering the war in Vietnam. He asked that the cable—a joint State-Defense-USIA directive—be discussed in a closed, rather than public, subcommittee session (hearings, Mar. 25, 1963, p. 116). The hearing, closed to protect information of military-security value, was held on May 24, 1963, with Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, as the witness.

This report covers the investigation of control of U.S. correspondents reporting developments in Vietnam and, particularly, the joint directive on the handling of U.S. correspondents. The directive is classified confidential under Executive Order 10501 which provides for the protection of military-security information. Sections of the directive quoted in this report and in the hearing are, therefore, paraphrased.

II. Findings and Conclusions

On September 29, 1961, Carl Rowan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, said at New York University that any contention that the people's right to know is an absolute and fundamental principle is "self-deception." He expressed his conviction that those concerned with the right to know are really more interested in the fourth estate's right "to make a buck." (See exhibit I.)

Early in 1962, Mr. Rowan drafted a "press guidance" telling U.S. Government officials in Vietnam how to handle U.S. reporters writing stories about the guerrilla warfare there. Mr. Rowan's press guidance was sent to the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, Vietnam, as an information directive from the State and Defense Departments and the U.S. Information Agency. It stated that—

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news stories which criticize the Diem government could not be "forbidden," but they only increase the difficulties of the U.S. job.

newsmen should be advised that trifling or thoughtless criticism of the Diem government would make it difficult to maintain cooperation between the United States and Diem.

newsmen should not be transported on military activities of the type that are likely to result in undesirable stories.

The State Department contended that the only fault of the 1962 press guidance was "sloppy drafting" and that it was not designed to restrict access to information about U.S. activities in Vietnam. Soon after the press guidance was issued, however, newsmen began reporting difficulties getting information from U.S. officials in Vietnam.

Although the State Department insisted that "layer on layer" of later telegrams superseded the 1962 press guidance, no specific action was taken to issue a general clarification of U.S. press policy in Vietnam until a few days before a subcommittee hearing on the subject. And the questionable sections of the 1962 press guidance were not officially rescinded until immediately after the subcommittee hearings.

In recent weeks the American public has been surprised by developments in Vietnam—developments which have been many months in the making but which the American people are just now discovering. The restrictive U.S. press policy in Vietnam—drafted in the State Department's public relations office by an official with an admitted distrust for the people's right to know—unquestionably contributed to the lack of information about conditions in Vietnam which created an international crisis. Instead of hiding the facts from the American public, the State Department should have done everything possible to expose the true situation to full view.

III. U.S. Control of News From Vietnam

A. ORIGINAL EXPLANATION OF INFORMATION PROBLEMS

When the subcommittee first looked into control of U.S. correspondents in Vietnam, it was assured that there was no censorship of their dispatches. Arthur Sylvester, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, also informed the subcommittee that the controversial State-Defense-USIA directive to the American Ambassador in Saigon merely "reflected the thought that in dealing with American newsmen covering South Vietnam operations, more flexibility at the local level was needed." (See exhibit II.)

In his testimony, Assistant Secretary Hilsman admitted the need to keep the American people well informed about U.S. operations in Vietnam and declared that "this has been the first principle of our press and information policy from the outset." He explained, however, that since the war was a Vietnamese operation—with the United States providing only the money, material, and advisers—the primary responsibility for access to news rested with the Vietnamese. In spite

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of the fact that President Ngo Dinh Diem had spent a good part of his life in the United States, Mr. Hilsman stated that it was difficult for the Vietnam Government to understand the principle of a free press (hearings, p. 393).

B. BACKGROUND OF THE 1962 INFORMATION DIRECTIVE

Assistant Secretary Hilsman testified that the controversial cable sent to the American Ambassador to Vietnam in early 1962 was only one of a series of directives on U.S. information handling in Vietnam. Objectional parts of the cable, he contended, were superseded by later directives, although neither the cable nor any part of it had been specifically rescinded (hearings, p. 396). Although he testified that "layer on layers of cables" had superseded the joint information directive long before the subcommittee hearing, Assistant Secretary Hilsman failed to mention a specific cable on the handling of information from Vietnam which was sent to Saigon just before the subcommittee hearing. This cable, classified confidential, did not rescind the earlier cable but did advise cooperation with U.S. correspondents.

Following the subcommittee hearing, the State Department reported that the joint information directive of early 1962 was drafted by Carl T. Rowan, then serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. The directive was "coordinated" with the Defense Department and the USIA by the State Department's Bureau of Public Affairs under Assistant Secretary Robert Manning and it was reviewed at a conference in Honolulu attended by representatives of all three Government agencies. The State Department reported that the directive "was prepared in accordance with general policy lines laid out by Secretary of State Rusk and the then Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, W. Averell Harriman" (hearings, p. 416).

C. CONTENTS OF THE INFORMATION DIRECTIVE

When subcommittee members discussed with Assistant Secretary Hilsman the question of whether the controversial cable directed U.S. officials in Vietnam to "manipulate" information provided to U.S. correspondents, he denied that that was the intent of the directive but admitted it was "very badly drafted." Mr. Hilsman said that the policy guidelines in the directive "were not precisely stated but fuzzily stated." While he denied that one particular paragraph of the cable "was an instruction to manage the news," he admitted:

> I don't know what that means. I can't find anybody who knows what it means. I can't find anybody who can give me a specific example.

Congressman Reuss summarized the discussion by pointing out that—

> the cable is indeed a model of ambiguous draftsmanship on a matter that ought to be very clear. So often the fuzzy words mask the fuzzy thoughts * * *. When you are setting forth what amounts to a policy of something less

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> than full and free press communication, I think you have to state the areas where the press is going to be denied complete freedom with precision and language that anybody can understand (hearings, p. 397).

Although one section of the information directive to the American Ambassador in Vietnam stated that unfavorable articles in American publications would make the U.S. task more difficult, Assistant Secretary Hilsman testified that it is not the present policy to prevent such articles (hearings, p. 398). He said a section of the direction stating that "critical articles are likely to impede the war effort" was not interpreted by the American Ambassador so as to deny any newsman "any access or any facilities or any briefing as a result of critical stories" (hearings, p. 398).

Commenting on a section of the directive which implied that "correspondents should not be taken on missions that might result in stories harmful to the war effort," Assistant Secretary Hilsman explained:

> That paragraph in the cable is a prize example of sloppy drafting, because no one knows what it means. It has no operational cutting edge * * *. If we were writing this cable correctly, as it really was meant to be, and the intention behind the paragraph was really clear, it would say we want to make sure that newsmen thoroughly understand the situation and are under no misapprehension that we are fighting this war. The Vietnamese are fighting it and the Vietnamese are directing it (hearings, p. 402).

D. REVISION OF THE INFORMATION DIRECTIVE

Assistant Secretary Hilsman testified that a message of November 24, 1962, to United States military personnel in South Vietnam from Gen. Paul D. Harkins, United States military commander in the area, was "a summation" of present United States information policy in Vietnam. The Harkins message concluded that—

> The American public has the right to maximum information concerning its armed services and their activities. This information should be limited only by restrictions imposed to safeguard the national interest. Advisers should, within reasonable bounds, attempt to comply with the need for a free flow of information (hearings, p. 406).

U.S. military advisers on Vietnamese missions were advised by the Harkins memorandum to be "sincere and truthful" when talking with the press and never to use security as an excuse for failure to discuss a subject which was not classified to protect military security.

The second secretary of the American Embassy in Saigon sent a copy of the Harkins memorandum—describing it as an "excellent letter"—to the Department of State. Assistant Secretary Hilsman stated that the Harkins memorandum took precedence over the controversial joint State-Defense-USIA information directive of early 1962 and testified that—

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> The letter is a reflection of policy directions from Washington, cleared with and prepared jointly with the Ambassador's staff. It is a summation of the directives received from Washington. * * * His letter was prepared on the basis of instructions and in consultation with the Ambassador, in accordance with the policies laid down in Washington (hearings, pp. 406 407).

Subcommittee members pointed out, however, that no single directive officially rescinded the questionable sections of the joint State-Defense-USIA information directive sent out in early 1962. Assistant Secretary Hilsman testified that the summation of the State Department's basic information policy in Vietnam, contained in his opening statement before the subcommittee, was the current information practice (hearings, p. 392). At the specific request of subcommittee members, he agreed to inform U.S. officials in Vietnam that the questionable sections of the earlier information directive were specifically rescinded (hearings, p. 414). A few days after the subcommittee hearing, a cable from Secretary of State Rusk was sent to the American Ambassador in Vietnam specifically rescinding the 1962 "press guidelines" concerning criticism of the Diem government. A copy of Assistant Secretary Hilsman's statement before the subcommittee on Vietnam press policy also was sent to the U.S. Embassy in Saigon for guidance, and steps were taken to draft a new information policy directive, based on the testimony. Assistant Secretary Hilsman reported, however, that before the new information guidelines could be sent "they were overtaken by radically changed conditions in Vietnam: the establishment of martial law and censorship by the Government of Vietnam on August 21." He stated that the United States has objected to the censorship and "good cooperation has prevailed between our Embassy and U.S. press representatives." (See exhibit III.)

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EXHIBIT I

REMARKS BY CARL T. ROWAN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS, AT THE PANEL DISCUSSION OF GOVERNMENT PRESS RELATIONS, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK, N.Y., SEPTEMBER 29, 1961

Mr. Chairman, my distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, to say that I am pleased to be here would be something of an overstatement, or certainly a misstatement, of what I really feel. I cannot dismiss lightly the comment of a colleague as I left the office today: "There goes our pal, Rowan—off to a maternity ward to argue against motherhood."

Let me assure you that while I have not exactly come under protest I certainly have come under no illusions, for I was a passionate part of the newspaper world long enough to learn that to favor withholding information from the press is like favoring sin, wife beating, or halitosis.

But I am not so far removed from the profession of journalism, which has been the only one that I have known, that I must come here with any feelings of guilt. I am far enough removed to know that there is much to be said about freedom of information, or Government secrecy, or call it what you will, that is not being said. So in the interest of the public's right to know the full story, I have come here to present some facts and express some opinions that I have not been accustomed to seeing in the speeches of those who cry so vehemently about secrecy in Government.

Let me clear up one point at the outset: What I am about to say is not necessarily the Government's case. I shall express my own honest convictions—convictions based on what I have seen of the operations of both Government and the press during my 8 months in the world of bureaucracy.

Now, if I cannot honestly express pleasure at being here, I can say with complete candor that I come with a real feeling of satisfaction, for I am eager to talk about a situation that I believe to be of the greatest national concern. I have longed to see our editors and the public probe deeper into a situation that for too long has been marked by emotional utterances but very little logic and commonsense.

I view with a mixture of both amusement and dismay the pious charges and declarations that would lead the less discerning to conclude that the only people in this country who really care about the public's right to know are the newspaper and magazine people. Many of my Government colleagues are, like myself, completely devoted to the belief that without a well-informed public no truly free society can survive. We are among the first to admit that the situation in Washington is far from perfect. There is a great deal of information which the public ought to have but does not get for a variety of reasons. In an organization as big and complex as the Federal Government there *are* public officials who want to hide their inefficiency or their

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mistakes. There *are* individuals who view the press with fear and/or contempt. There are individuals who regard the press only as a vehicle to be used when they want to dispense self-serving propaganda. There is a great deal of information that the public does not get because that information gets lost in the maze of bureaucracy, or it is filed away by an individual whose inexperience or ignorance makes that individual unaware of the serious need to educate the public.

But having said this, I must be candid and state that the "holier than thou" attitude of many of the Government's critics rubs me the wrong way. I am wise enough to the workings of the world of publishing to know that a great deal of this so-called concern about the public's right to know is really concern about the fourth estate's right to make a buck.

I was not aware until taking on my present job just how "scoop conscious" the American press remains. Many of the newsmen with whom I deal are far more concerned about their reputations than about how well informed the American public is. Far too few newsmen—or editors—are willing to weigh their stories against the national interest—especially if it means giving up a "beat" and the opportunity to boast about it in a promotion ad.

I mention this, because I know that no meaningful discussion of a really serious problem can take place unless we get rid of this notion that all the good intentions are on one side and all the foul scheming on the other.

Those of us who have temporarily deserted jobs as reporters, editors, and broadcasters have come to expect those still in the communications industry to ask, "How does it feel to be on the other side?" with the same regularity with which they ask about the weather.

I do not believe that most of them really assume that our purposes are so counter to theirs. Nor do I believe that they really feel any disappointment that we newspapermen-turned-bureaucrats do not rush out daily tossing the key to some Government safe to whatever lucky newspaperman might grasp it. Nor do I really believe that they view our occasional "no comment" as an effort to hide something, or to protect some scoundrel in Government.

I believe that the more thoughtful of my ex-colleagues realize that what they are seeing is evidence that nothing is more sobering than responsibility. There are many of us in Government who, while passionate believers in a full flow of information to the public, are faced also with the fact that we have taken oaths to protect the vital interest of our country and its people.

You do not take this kind of oath and sit in Washington in a sensitive job very long without admitting to yourself that while the public does have a right to know, it also has a right *not* to know.

Even against the background of a lifelong career in journalism, I say that the more ardent advocates of the public's right to know too often engage in eager self-deception. They have sanctified this theme of the people's right to know by cloaking it in a set of platitudes and high-sounding phrases, and then act as though the people's right to know is an absolute and fundamental principle which cannot in any way be restricted or abrogated.

Last April President Kennedy spoke on this problem before the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Asso-

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ciation. He pointed out, I think quite convincingly, that our democracy faces some great difficulties in its mortal struggle against a totalitarian regime. Mr Kennedy emphasized the fact that we face certain disadvantages because ours is an open society while the Sino-Soviet bloc which confronts us can operate under conditions of complete secrecy. He pointed out that Communist leadership has no free press looking over its shoulder criticizing decisions before and after they are made, giving away crucial fallback positions even before negotiations start, arousing public opinion, and sometimes hysteria, to the point where it becomes virtually impossible to make decisions on the basis of what leaders believe to be wisest and most in the national interest.

Mr. Kennedy knows, and I now know far better than I did a year ago, that our democracy is burdened by all these difficulties to one degree or another, and this burden is fundamental to the life and death struggle that we are in today.

But Mr. Kennedy did not ask for censorship. He asked only for the thoughtfulness, the responsibility, the restraint on the part of the communications industry that mere patriotism would demand. I noted, however, that much of the American press reacted only with suspicion and more platitudes about the public's right to know.

For example, the Chicago Tribune commented: "We cannot believe that the people of this country want to take even the first step in the direction of suppression of the truth that makes men free." The New York Herald Tribune said: "In the long run, competent, thorough, and aggressive news reporting is the uncompromising servant of the national interest even though it may be momentarily embarrassing to the Government."

These are noble, high-sounding sentiments with which no believer in democracy could quarrel if we lived in an ivory tower vacuum. But the complications of being part of a terribly complex world society imposes obligations of restraint and responsibility on the free press, just as the complications of living in an organized society places limitations upon the individual's freedom of speech. As one of our eminent jurists said, "freedom of speech does not mean the right to yell 'fire' in a crowded theater" when there is no fire.

I can think of many things that our newspapers could publish tomorrow—and many would if they had the chance—that would so completely serve the interests of the Soviet Union that it would be not "the truth that makes men free," but the truth that helps make men slaves.

I would agree emphatically with the Herald Tribune that competent, thorough, and aggressive reporting must continue, whatever the embarrassment to the Government—but there is a vast difference between embarrassing Mr. Kennedy or Mr. Eisenhower and jeopardizing the lives of 180 million people.

This is what Mr. Kennedy meant when he told the newspaper publishers:

"This Nation's foes have openly boasted of acquiring through our newspapers information they would otherwise hire agents to acquire through theft, bribery, or espionage; that details of this Nation's covert preparations to counter the enemy's covert operations have been available to every newspaper reader, friend and foe alike; that the size, the strength, the location and the nature of our forces and

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weapons, and our plans and strategy for their use, have all been pinpointed in the press and other news media to a degree sufficient to satisfy any foreign power; and that, in at least one case, the publication of details concerning a secret mechanism whereby satellites were followed required its alteration at the expense of considerable time and money."

In my few months in Washington I have seen scores of instances where newsmen have printed material, ostensibly to inform the public, when those newsmen realized that they had only part of the story. They were *misinforming* the public—and put in different shoes they would be among the first to concede that the public need not know that particular story.

I do not want to seem to criticize the press as a whole. I will concede that we are fortunate to this extent: our biggest problems are the better newspapers with the more enterprising reporters, and these generally are the newspapers with the greatest sense of responsibility.

Some time back an incident occurred involving a diplomat from an important foreign country. It was a complicated, frustrating affair, and to solve it the Department had to use every kind of diplomacy known to it. Here was an issue which not only jeopardized our relations with this country, but almost certainly would cost us several crucial votes in the U.N. this fall were it made public without the elaborate explanations that almost no American newspaper was likely to give.

Just when we had the situation resolved to the satisfaction of both governments, our Bureau learned that one of the best newsmen in Washington was about to print a story about the incident.

"Shall we ask him not to run it?" I was asked.

"No," I said. "I'm positive that he doesn't know the whole story, or all the background. Let's call him in and tell him the story from start to finish. Then we shall simply say to him, 'We don't propose to tell you how to run your newspaper. Whether you print the story is up to you.' "

The reporter appreciated the full explanation, for he was the first to admit that while all the information that he had had was factual, his story would have been misleading in implication and unfair to all of the parties involved.

The reporter explained to his editors and they agreed unanimously that this was a story that they could do without.

I would defy anyone to show me that the public interest was harmed in any way by this newspaper's decision.

And I think it will be obvious to any man of reason and intelligence that while this kind of full explanation is possible for a responsible newsman for a responsible newspaper, it would be folly to try it on a great many other reporters, in Washington and elsewhere.

This was a case of a reporter and his editors deciding, in effect, that the public had a right *not* to know that story. Not a day goes by but what those of us in Government must make this kind of judgment dozens of times. In a period of undeclared war, we constantly must decide how far we can go in providing the well-informed populace without which a "free society" becomes a mockery without violating our oath to protect this country from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

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There are days in my present job when I am forced to chuckle wryly about the irony of this situation. I know that were I to meet a Communist agent and give him information bearing even the lowest security classification, most of the newspapers in the Nation would literally howl for my scalp. Yet, not a day goes by but what some newspaperman is not invoking the "public's right to know" in an effort to get information of the very highest security classification.

No newspaper editor is going to agree with all the decisions we make as to when it is in the national interest to withhold certain information from the public. Some of us are able to make our decisions as best we know how without any pangs of conscience, however, because we know that even those editors who are most critical of the Government will themselves make decisions each day as to what the public does or does not have the right to know.

Should or should not the press report that the wife of big shot politician X gets drunk almost every night? Should the Daily Bugle do some aggressive reporting about the circumstances under which the son of Podunk's leading industrialist got his draft deferment? Does the public have a right to know that Jim Smith, who has been a pillar of civic strength and a leading public figure for 20 years, spent a year in the reformatory in his teens?

Any honest editor knows that outside Government this question of the public's right to know never has been all black or all white. Nor is such the case in Government.

But in closing let me say that I am reminded of the story of the little man who was beaten regularly by his large wife. One day a friend asked him why he never fought back too vigorously, or refused to call the police.

"Oh, I don't want to do that," he said. "It don't hurt me a lot and it does her so much good."

I want the press to go on criticizing Government, branding needless secrecy wherever it exists. I don't think it is going to hurt us an awful lot, and if you criticize responsibly—and reserve some of the criticism for the press itself—it can do not only the communications industry but our entire Nation an awful lot of good.

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EXHIBIT II

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE,
Washington, D.C., June 30, 1962.

Hon. JOHN E. MOSS,
Chairman, Special Government Information Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am responding to your letter of June 15, 1962, in which you ask concerning press access to information about U.S. activities in South Vietnam.

In South Vietnam, news about military operations obviously is derived from two sources, the Government of South Vietnam and South Vietnam nationals, and representatives of the United States, military and civilian. It appears that in general, the South Vietnamese Government has been most reasonable in its attitude toward and requirements of American news representatives. The U.S. relationship with the news representatives is the concern of the U.S. Ambassador, whose public affairs officer is the senior U.S. public affairs official on the scene.

The basic directive under which U.S. representatives in South Vietnam conduct their relations with news representatives was issued February 20, 1962, in the form of a joint State-Defense-USIA message to the American Ambassador, Saigon. This message reflected the thought that in dealing with American newsmen covering South Vietnam operations, more flexibility at the local level was needed. You will note that this basic directive, two copies of which are at your request enclosed, is classified "Confidential."

May I say in answering other specific questions that news media representatives in South Vietnam are not required to be accredited by the Department of Defense. We continue to process requests for accreditation to the Department under the program established in 1948, and most if not all of the news media representatives in the South Vietnam area are accredited. There is no censorship of press dispatches or other news material. News media representatives are not given logistic support; however, because of the nature of the terrain and the scarcity of nonmilitary vehicles, media representatives are provided local transportation, including helicopter airlift, to assist them in covering specific assignments.

I am glad to be able to assure you that liaison between U.S. military and civilian authorities in South Vietnam, both formal and informal, is so frequent that it can be said to be continuous. During my recent visit to the area I was especially interested in the arrangements by which the military and civilian authorities keep each other informed of their activities and interests. In my opinion the liaison is excellent.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

ARTHUR SYLVESTER.

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EXHIBIT III

88TH CONGRESS, FOREIGN OPERATIONS
AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
July 29, 1963.

Mr. ROGER HILSMAN,
Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs,
Department of State, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. HILSMAN: At a Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee hearing on May 24, 1963, you agreed to inform U.S. personnel in Vietnam that a 1962 cable on information problems in the area had been superseded. You agreed to specifically rescind one section of the cable warning that U.S. correspondents should not be taken on missions that might result in undesirable news stories.

I understand this action was taken a few days after the hearing, and at that time you also informed the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam that specific guidances on handling the press were being prepared. If the guidelines referred to have been completed, please provide two copies for inclusion in the subcommittee's record of the hearing and specify when and to whom the guidelines were sent out. If the guidelines have not been completed, please state who is working on them and when they will be finished.

Sincerely,

JOHN E. MOSS, *Chairman.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, August 5, 1963.

Hon. JOHN E. MOSS,
Chairman, Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: With regard to your letter of July 29, this is to confirm that, as I indicated during my testimony before your subcommittee, Deptel 1006 has been superseded and paragraph 7 specifically rescinded. A copy of my statement before your subcommittee has also been sent to our Saigon Embassy for their guidance.

Our press and information policy will continue to be guided by the principles which I expressed in my prepared statement. As suggested during my appearance before the subcommittee, moreover, we intend to draft a cable which will specifically set out those principles in the form of an instruction so that there will be no question whatever as to what our policy is.

As you know, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Robert J. Manning recently went to Saigon to take a firsthand reading on press and information problems there. Mr. Manning has given me a report on his Saigon visit, but I am anxious to get his personal

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participation in the drafting of this message, in case he has any specific suggestions for helping our newsmen. Although he is now back from Saigon, he immediately left Washington on a long delayed vacation. When he returns, we will promptly draft and despatch a guidelines message which encompasses my testimony and Mr. Manning's specific suggestions. A copy of the message will be sent to you for inclusion in the subcommittee record as soon as it is available.

Sincerely,

ROGER HILSMAN.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, September 17, 1963.

Hon. JOHN E. MOSS,
Chairman, Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On August 5 I responded to your letter of July 29 and confirmed that Deptel 1006 to Saigon had been superseded and paragraph 7 specifically rescinded. I also reported that a copy of my statement before your subcommittee had been sent to our Embassy for guidance.

Since that time I can report that a new press guidelines cable was drafted in the Department in accordance with my assurance to the subcommittee. Before these guidelines could be sent, however, they were overtaken by radically changed conditions in Vietnam: the establishment of martial law and censorship by the Government of Vietnam on August 21.

In the situation of turbulence that has existed since that date, the Department of State has expressed to the Vietnamese Government its strong objections to the new press censorship, and Ambassador Lodge has stressed our concern repeatedly in his conversations with high Vietnamese officials. In this period good cooperation has prevailed between our Embassy and U.S. press representatives.

Now that martial law and censorship have been lifted, as of September 16, we are reviewing our previous draft guidelines in the context of the altered situation.

Sincerely,

ROGER HILSMAN.

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